

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 17th, 2023

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Asian Cinevision Announces 46th Asian American International Film Festival Announces Award Winners



August 17, 2023, NEW YORK – Asian CineVision is excited to announce the award winners for the 46th Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF).

Running from July 26 to August 6, in 12 exhilarating days, AAIFF celebrated storytelling from the Asian and Asian diaspora community with programming that included over 100 feature and short films. Together, the festival cultivated communal joy and forged lasting connections. In a hybrid format, this year's AAIFF featured in-person events and programming such as *Retrospectives in Dialogue*, *Centerpiece: Music Night Out!*, the third annual *Interactive Media Gallery*, and riveting Q&As panels with filmmakers. The latter half of the festival went online, making screenings even more accessible via video on demand (VOD).

The Emerging Director awards recognize first or second time feature film directors. The Emerging Director in Narrative went to Sebastien Tobler, director of *THIS TIME*, while the award for Emerging Director in Documentary went to Law Chen, director of *STARRING JERRY AS HIMSELF*. The complete list of nominees is listed below, with category winners listed first in bold.

Six jury prize award winners were selected by leading industry experts including noted Chinese American rapper Bohan Phoenix, Emmy award-winning Taiwanese American Foley artist

Joanna Fang, filmmaker/film critic Siddhant Adlakha from Mumbai, India., among others. The full lineup of jurors is also listed below.

AWARD NOMINEES & WINNERS

EMERGING DIRECTOR - NARRATIVE FEATURE

THIS TIME, dir. Sebastien Tobler - U.S.

WAITING FOR THE LIGHT TO CHANGE, dir. Linh Tran - U.S.

LONELY SPIRITS VARIETY HOUR, dir. Platon Theodoris - Australia

JUROR STATEMENT: Sebastien Tobler's THIS TIME was a true joy to watch, featuring well-developed characters with authentic emotional arcs. Through engaging direction, this directorial debut explores powerful political ideals.



EMERGING DIRECTOR - DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

STARRING JERRY AS HIMSELF, dir. Law Chen - U.S.

Photographic Justice: The Corky Lee Story, dir. Jennifer Takaki - U.S.

Dear Mother I Meant to Write About Death, dir. Siyi Chen - China, U.S.

JUROR STATEMENT: Law Chen's STARRING JERRY AS HIMSELF is a captivating and genre-bending documentary that really takes the concept of telling our own stories to a whole different level! Playful, yet devastating, this heartwarming cautionary tale takes us on an emotional journey, and is poised to captivate a global audience.



❑ **EXCELLENCE IN NARRATIVE SHORT FILMMAKING**

YOUNG PEOPLE, OLD PEOPLE, AND NOTHING IN BETWEEN, dir. Parida Tantiwasadakran - Thailand, U.S.

EID MUBARAK, dir. Mahnoor Euceph - Pakistan

HALF-METER, dir. Zebang Yang, China

SILK & RUSHES, dir. Ryushi Lindsay, Japan

THE OLD YOUNG CROW, dir. Liam LoPinto - Japan, Iran, U.S.

JUROR STATEMENT: YOUNG PEOPLE, OLD PEOPLE, AND NOTHING IN BETWEEN offers a unique perspective in its portrayal of Alzheimer's and early onset dementia yet stays extremely relatable and grounded. Bolstered by two winning performances with organic familial chemistry, this heartfelt and earnestly sincere film stands out as a moving and memorable addition in any shorts program.



❑ **EXCELLENCE IN DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILMMAKING**

BLOOD OF IRAN, dir. Alicia Afshar - U.S., Iran

A HUI HOU (UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN), dir. Kainoa Presbitero - U.S.

HANDWRITTEN, dir. Jaime Sunwoo - U.S.

RIDING HAN, dir. Pak Eugene - U.S., South Korea

WHITE GRASS, dir. Justin Kim WooSök - Mongolia

JUROR STATEMENT: BLOOD OF IRAN artfully weaves a powerful and urgent statement on the Iranian women's movement. Skillfully blending various styles, with arresting visuals and evocative use of music, this emotionally charged portrait of Iran is a brave and poignant tribute to the nation's struggle.



❑ **ONE TO WATCH AWARD (for filmmakers under the age of 21)**

MY SISTERS IN THE STARS: THE STORY OF LEE YONG-SOO, dir. Ian Kim - U.S., South Korea

ONE LAST TIME, dir. John Kim - U.S.

18 ROSES, dir. Danielle Coronado, Ben See-Tho - Canada, Philippines, U.S.

DANCE IN CIRCLES, dir. Yuming Zhang - U.S., China

I MISS YOU, dir. Hyungjin Lee - South Korea, U.S.

THE SUN RISES DIFFERENTLY, dir. Jiayang Liu, U.S.

UPROOT, dir. Queena Liu, Canada

JUROR STATEMENT: Fast-paced yet engaging, MY SISTERS IN THE STARS: THE STORY OF LEE YONG-SOO masterfully weaves together detailed animation, powerful narration, and high-quality sound design to shed light on a harrowing survivor's story. The film's concise and efficient editing covers multiple layers, leaving a well-executed piece that resonates with heart and leaves a lasting impact, defying its student origins with its exceptional production value.



❑ **EXCELLENCE IN MUSIC VIDEO**

SUBLIMINAL, dir. Jess X. Snow - U.S.

HEI, I'M HOME, dir. Lo Lam - Hong Kong

ISLANDS, dir. Lili Fang - U.S.

SO BEAUTIFUL SO LONELY, dir. Xiao Han - U.S.

BODY OF MY NAME, dir. Rosie Choo Pidcock - Canada, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong

I WISH I DIDN'T CARE, dir. Katherine A. Baguio - U.S., Philippines

JUROR STATEMENT: Through stunning blocking and graceful minimalism, **SUBLIMINAL** perfectly matches music and visuals, creating an absolutely beautiful piece that tugs at the viewer's emotions.



- ❑ **AUDIENCE AWARD - NARRATIVE FEATURE**
SAMSON, dir. Ruth Du - USA



- ❑ **AUDIENCE AWARD - DOCUMENTARY FEATURE**
NURSE UNSEEN, dir. Michele Josue - Philippines, USA, UK



- ❑ **AUDIENCE AWARD - SHORT FILM**
BAYARD STREET, dir. Cindy Chu - USA



JURORS

❑ **EMERGING DIRECTOR - NARRATIVE FEATURE**

Joseph Carranza (Co-Director of Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival)

Siddhant Adlakha (Filmmaker/Film Critic)

Yao King (Founder and Chief Investment Officer of YKAM, New York Lead of Gold House)

❑ **EMERGING DIRECTOR - DOCUMENTARY FEATURE**

Lucy J. Mukerjee (Director of the Documentary Lab at Firelight Media, Co-Founder of the Programmers Of Colour Collective)

Nicole Tsien (Independent Producer)

Sapana Sakya (Talent Development & Special Projects Director at the Center for Asian American Media)

❑ **EXCELLENCE IN NARRATIVE SHORT FILMMAKING**

Benjamin Yap (Archive Officer at Asian Film Archive, Deep-Cut Film Podcast, Filmmaker)

Joanna Fang (Emmy Award winning Taiwanese American Foley artist)

Sibyl Reymundo-Santiago (Documentary Filmmaker, Executive Director for the SOHO International Film Festival and the SOHO Film Forum)

❑ **EXCELLENCE IN DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILMMAKING**

Elise Coker (Documentary Filmmaker and Writer)

Nicole Tsien (Independent Producer)

Sapana Sakya (Talent Development & Special Projects Director at the Center for Asian American Media)

❑ **EXCELLENCE IN MUSIC VIDEO**

Bohan Phoenix (Musician)
Isabella Tan (Executive Creative Director at Rebel Motion)
Tomson Tee (Director)

❑ **YOUTH ONE TO WATCH AWARD**

Eileen Level (Education Manager at New York International Children's Film Festival)
Milky Tran (Producer/Director at Jubilee Media)
Ja-Ann Wang (Adjunct Professor at NYU, Writer, Director, Producer, Sound Editor)

About the Asian American International Film Festival

The Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF) is proudly known as "The First Home to Asian American Cinema." Organized by Asian CineVision, it's the first and longest-running festival dedicated to showcasing the moving image work by media artists of Asian descent for and about the Asian diaspora experience. The Festival takes place in New York City, the second-largest Asian-American market in the U.S. Every year, AAIFF attracts audiences from all five boroughs of New York City, the tri-state region, and around the world.

About Asian CineVision

Asian CineVision (ACV) is a media arts nonprofit devoted to the development, exhibition, promotion, and preservation of Asian and Asian American experiences through storytelling. Our mission is to nurture and grow the community of makers and lovers of Asian and Asian American independent film, television, and digital.

Films submitted and screened at the festival are eligible to participate in our National Tour program, bringing Asian diaspora stories to broader audiences across North America through a rental service for cultural and educational institutions.

Thank You

THE 2023 ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MARY LI HSU CHARITABLE TRUST, MAYOR'S OFFICE OF MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT, TAMIMENT LIBRARY ROBERT F. WAGNER LABOR ARCHIVE, NYU SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, ASIAN/PACIFIC/AMERICAN INSTITUTE AT NYU, CUNY AAARI, CUNY GRADUATE CENTER, YAO KING, AND THE MANY FRIENDS OF ACV.

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